

THE AFTERMATH OF SAN JACINTO*

IF THE Mexican Republic had confronted insoluble problems during its fifteen years of independence—and this is attested by the fact that during the first twelve years they had had one emperor and five presidents—these problems were, in 1836, multiplied tenfold. The nation was bankrupt, a part of its army defeated, the remainder in flight, its president captive. What was to be done to free Santa Anna, putting the question from the viewpoint of his supporters? What was to be done if he were released, putting the question from the viewpoint of his opponents? How could the prisoners of San Jacinto be saved from almost certain execution in reprisal for the Goliad Massacre? Would the other Mexican armies in Texas suffer the same fate as that commanded by Santa Anna, or should reinforcements be sent, thus exposing the government to being overthrown from within? Would Yucatan try to regain her independence and throw off the yoke of Mexican rule as Texas was trying to do, and as Zacatecas had tried to do only the year before? Would Texas independence have to be recognized as a *fait accompli*? We shall see, in a cursory sort of way, how unsuccessful the Mexicans were in settling these questions; fate, which they blamed rather than themselves, for the disaster at San Jacinto, dealt its misery by the handfuls, to paraphrase a remark that Santa Anna had used in his happier days to describe the manner in which fortune had bestowed its bounty upon him.¹

With the defeat of the Mexicans on April 21, 1836, ended all possibility of the reconquest of Texas, partly because the

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prisoners proved valuable for purposes of bargaining, partly because the low morale of the remaining Mexican armies grew into panic upon hearing of the unexpected disaster. Filisola, upon whom fell the supreme command, described their state of mind in these words:

"Defeated at San Jacinto and their leader a prisoner, without resources, the rainy season near at hand, worried and uncertain about conditions back home, they turned their sad eyes from the right bank of the Brazos upon the great deserts that they had just crossed . . . and they saw only a melancholy future which convinced them that the woods and sloughs of Texas were destined to become their graves; not because of any action on the part of the enemy, but rather because of abandonment, hunger, nakedness, the climate and the rigors of the weather, all of which awaited them."²

This discontent and anxiety was not limited to the ranks, for the officers, too, were disgruntled at the lack of food and extra campaign allowances. The new commander thought that if the officers had been allowed their rations, they would have gone "willingly and relieved of the worry of having to obtain their daily food where it was not to be found; they would have had more time to devote themselves to the obligations of their respective tasks, and one could have avoided the bad example and scandal of the daily complaints and murmurs expressed with vehemence and bitterness."³

The story of Santa Anna's capture is so well known that we need not give the details here. When he was brought into the Texas camp and saw the grim expressions on the faces of his foe, he lost no time in getting down to the business of ending hostilities. First, there were the polite greetings between the two commanders; then Santa Anna, who is reported to have had quite a collection of Napoleoniana at his

vast estate of Manga de Clavo near Vera Cruz, congratulated Houston on having conquered the mighty Napoleon of the West. The Mexicans doubt that this remark was made, but Houston and others said that it was true. The news of San Jacinto reached San Antonio a few days later, and Dr. Joseph Barnard, one of the physicians spared from execution at Goliad in order that he might attend the Mexican sick and wounded in San Antonio, told a Frenchman living there of this remark of Santa Anna. The Frenchman jumped to his feet and exclaimed, "What! Does Santa Anna compare himself to Napoleon because he can run about with two or three thousand ragged Indians and take a few mud towns? Does he think that his greatest exploit will bear any comparison to the least thing done by our hero?"⁴

Santa Anna asked to begin the peace negotiations without delay, but Houston informed him that such matters as exchange of prisoners and recognition of Texas independence must be referred to President Burnet and members of the Texas cabinet. But Santa Anna, anxious to do something to erase the memories of the Alamo and Goliad, insisted on sending an order to the Mexican armies, still numbering over 4,000 men, to retire to Bexar to await the outcome of peace negotiations. This he did the very next day. On Saturday, two days after the battle, John Rusk, the only member of the cabinet present with the army, remembered that he had not sent any message to other members of the provisional government who had taken refuge in Galveston. In fact, it was difficult to keep up with Burnet who, while sending back messages to Houston to "Stop and fight. Retreat no farther," was himself outrunning all the others. He was finally located five days after the battle and arrived a few days thereafter at San Jacinto. After a few days of discussion, the government officials decided to

go to Galveston where they considered that they, as well as Santa Anna and the other prisoners, would be safer in case the remaining Mexican armies should move southward.

The mosquitoes and gnats proved to be unbearable and suitable quarters hard to find in Galveston; so the entire party went to Velasco. It was here, on May 14, that Santa Anna signed the two treaties, one public and the other secret, which granted every Texas request except that Santa Anna order all the Mexican armies in Texas to surrender. So severely was the President criticized in Mexico for his generosity that he was forced, upon his return to his home in 1837, to explain point by point why he had agreed to such humiliating terms. As an example, to explain the first provision of the public treaty which read, "General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna agrees that he will not take up arms, nor will he exercise his influence to cause them to be taken up against the people of Texas during the present war of independence," he said, "The Directory of Texas, let us call it thus, arbiters of my life and that of 600 Mexicans, wished to see our entire expeditionary force lay down its arms and become prisoners; that . . . Generals Filisola, Gaona, Urrea, and Ramírez y Sesma . . . sign . . . not to take arms against Texas. I converted this idea into a personal promise on my part not to make war, one from which no prisoner can save himself. It was desired that my influence should be used upon the entire nation . . . to make it lay down its arms. I changed this proposal to a negative, that is, I promised not to use my influence for the continuation of the struggle."⁵

While Santa Anna was eagerly signing the treaties that gave him life, for which he was grasping as a drowning man grasps at a straw (Santa Anna likened himself to a lost traveler groping his way in the darkness and the storm, taking advan-

tage of every flash of lightning to insure his salvation), panic had seized the once awesome army of the Mexican Republic. At three o'clock on the 22nd, according to Filisola, word reached him of the disaster at San Jacinto, by means of a note written by the adjutant of the Guerrero battalion. General Ramírez y Sesma, who was standing near Filisola as the latter read the news, asked, "What has happened, my boy?" Filisola handed him the paper, saying, "Much more than we feared, my friend." After Sesma had read the note, he exclaimed, "Heavens! He has ruined himself and us by his confounded haste and his refusal to listen to the advice of his friends."⁶

Santa Anna had never apprised any of the other generals of his campaign plans; in fact, Filisola said he had none. Although Santa Anna must have had some notion of what he intended to do, it is certain that his strategy was very vague, as evidenced by the manner in which the commander improvised and gave counter-orders from day to day. The possibility of a defeat and a forced withdrawal seems never to have entered his mind. One might say that he was the man without a plan. Filisola, then, had to devise one, and he had only a few hours in which to do it. Four alternatives presented themselves, none of them good:

1. He could advance upon the enemy and give battle;
2. He could remain where he was at Old Fort on the defensive;
3. He could retreat to a safer location and reorganize;
4. He could withdraw to Mexico.

Filisola reasoned as follows: to attack the enemy was out of the question; the cumbersome army that he commanded could not have reached San Jacinto or vicinity for a week or more in the torrential rains that were falling at the time,

and with the resistance that would be offered at every creek and bayou. He would have had to post detachments at every crossing to hold the line of communications, and many of his force were sick, so that he would have arrived, by his calculations, with fewer troops than the enemy. Moreover, there was no assurance that he would find the quick-striking Texans, especially if they felt that an encounter would be disadvantageous. Finally, if he should overcome all difficulties and meet the Texans, the consequences of a Mexican victory would be almost as calamitous as a defeat, for Santa Anna and the other prisoners would certainly be sacrificed.

If the second alternative were adopted (remaining on the Brazos), it would be necessary to build barracks, repair shops, hospitals and forts. Then Filisola would have to send contingents of his force to hold the line to Matamoros at a point on the Colorado River, and to hold La Vaca, Victoria, Matagorda, Goliad, el Copano and San Patricio. He then would have too few men to scout the enemy and prevent a flank attack, as he was exposed to volunteers from the United States coming upon his rear by way of Nacogdoches. Therefore the third alternative was adopted for the moment, with the firm expectation that the fourth (retreat to Mexico) would become inevitable.

During the four days following the battle of San Jacinto, a total of nine Mexican participants succeeded in reaching Filisola's army. It is doubtful if many more escaped, although a few could have hidden themselves with Mexican sympathizers, of whom there was a considerable number. Wild reports of 6,000 Texans, plus a true account of the terrible slaughter which did not have to be exaggerated, precipitated the stampede. All of Filisola's reasoning concerning what course of action to adopt was merely academic.

The Mexicans began recrossing the Brazos that very day and even set fire to a cotton gin to light up the river at night. On the 23rd Filisola left General Gaona with one battalion to complete the crossing while he, apparently with Generals Sesma and Woll, marched for Mrs. Powell's place, 15 miles west of the Brazos. On the 22nd or 23rd Filisola sent an order, which in all the confusion was misdated the 24th, to General Urrea at Brazoria directing him to come with his entire force to the same meeting place without stopping for any reason whatsoever. With this directive went also a proclamation as follows: "Soldiers: A cowardly and perfidious enemy has been able by chance to acquire advantages over the section commanded personally by the president, on account of the scorn that the enemy inspired in him, for otherwise the valor of the brave men who made up our forces could never have been checked even for a moment. This small, although very regrettable event, excites the Mexican army to vengeance and increases the indignation against the vile enemy that it is fighting. The wicked ones who have tried to steal a part of our country will keenly regret the accidental triumph that they have won."

General Urrea arrived at Mrs. Powell's on the night of the 24th, shortly after the remnants of Filisola's army, and asked to be permitted to pitch camp apart from the others. Although the new commander did not understand at the time why such an odd request was made, permission was granted. On the 25th, Filisola called a council of generals, colonels and lesser officers, but three of the six generals, namely Sesma, Tolsa and Woll, refused to attend any council to which lesser officers were invited. In order that the men might not learn of the disagreement existing among the generals, a second notice was sent out informing the other officers that a mis-

take had been made. At the meeting, presided over by Filisola, were Sesma, Tolsa, Woll, Gaona and Urrea. First, Filisola offered to resign as supreme commander because he was of foreign birth, and therefore likely to inspire distrust in the discontented, shattered army. Gaona, another Italian, and Woll, a Frenchman, would have been disqualified for the same reason. The other three, Sesma, Tolsa and Urrea, the only native Mexicans, expressed their complete confidence in Filisola, as did Gaona and Woll; so Filisola retained his command. Actually Urrea secretly coveted the honor, but was too well acquainted with the sorry plight of the army to make an open bid at the time. He foresaw that if the army remained in Texas, it faced starvation, if not annihilation; if it should retreat to Mexico, the commander might be court-martialed for withdrawing with an undefeated force which was four times as large as the enemy's.

At about this point two officers who had eluded the Texans at San Jacinto arrived and reported that they had heard many shots on the 22nd, the day after the battle, and that without doubt all the Mexican prisoners, including Santa Anna, had been shot. Thereupon, the generals decided that they should retire beyond the Colorado to set up repair shops and hospitals and to replenish their supplies, although nobody knew how any of these things could be accomplished without a single gunsmith or doctor, without clothing, and almost without food, and absolutely without hope that any substantial quantities could be sent from Mexico. Urrea, while conceding that retreat was inevitable, expressed regret that previous conquests must go for naught. The remainder of the 25th was spent resting, if it can be said that a whole army can rest in a cabin with two rooms eighteen feet square, for none of the soldiers had ever had tents during the whole campaign which

had begun almost six months before. After having decided upon the first step to be taken by the army, Filisola drafted a communication to the Mexican government informing it of the outcome at San Jacinto in so far as he knew it.

On the 26th, in a sea of mud, the army began its march which ended some six weeks later with the men dying from thirst and a scorching sun. The men were barefoot, for all but a lucky few had walked at least from San Luis Potosí to San Antonio, then to San Felipe, down to Richmond, and finally to Matamoros. Their clothing had rotted from the rain and mud and sunshine to which they were constantly exposed. They had no tents or blankets and they slept on the bare ground. Most of the ox-carts and mules which transported the scanty food supplies and munitions had long since been abandoned, for there was little left to transport. Some of the carts remaining were now broken and strewn along the path of retreat. From the very beginning transportation had been a bigger problem than Santa Anna had anticipated. Some of the mules had frozen to death in a freak snowstorm; others were stolen by the Indians or stampeded by their wild cries and, according to Filisola, by the smell of horsemeat on the Indians' breath. As the Texans had burned over most of the grasslands, the mules had nothing to eat and consequently grew so weak as to exasperate the drivers, who beat them mercilessly or even stuck them with their bayonets. If you wonder why mule-drivers carried bayonets, the explanation is that the professional muleteers had deserted for lack of pay, and soldiers were impressed into this profession. The oxen did not fare any better, for they had no more to eat than the mules, and being even slower by nature, the soldiers tried to hasten their pace also with bayonets in order not to fall behind the troops. Speaking of these sad events, Filisola,

who admittedly did not omit a single detail that would justify his retreat, remarked, "It filled one with pity to see those suffering animals all bloody and full of wounds that fell dead while walking, so thin and dried up that their flesh was not even good to eat. Where the oxen fell, the carts were abandoned."⁸

The few carts that were left were emptied to transport the sick and wounded, so that now the soldiers themselves had to carry all the supplies. They soon threw away their heavy burdens, leaving a trail littered with broken-down carts, harness, ammunition boxes, discarded guns and skeletons of both pack animals and unburied soldiers. Curiously enough, even food was discarded, for Santa Anna had been so niggardly in issuing food that the butter had become rancid and the hardtack had rotted.

The Mexicans made fair progress on their first day out of Mrs. Powell's, but that night a heavy rain filled the creek on which they were encamped, so that the next day, the 27th, the army could march only a short distance to the San Bernardo. At about two o'clock in the afternoon of that day Filisola received the first communications from Santa Anna. Until then it was not known that the commander-in-chief was still alive; in fact, he had been considered dead. The first message read, "I have become a prisoner of war in the hands of our adversaries and they have shown me all possible consideration; in view of this I am notifying your Excellency to order General Gaona to counter-march to Bexar to await further orders, as you will do with the troops under your command; you will likewise order General Urrea to withdraw with his division to Victoria; for an armistice has been agreed upon with General Houston while negotiations are being arranged that will end the war forever."⁹ This message was

dated April 22. At the same time there arrived another, dated three days later, asking for the baggage of Santa Anna, Colonel Almonte and General Castrillón the latter of whom had been killed at San Jacinto. The President ended, "I recommend that you fulfill my orders as soon as possible concerning the withdrawal of the troops, for this is very necessary for the safety of the prisoners and in particular for that of your very affectionate friend and companion."¹⁰ Incidentally, Filisola was obliged to buy a horse, at an exorbitant price, from Urrea in order to transmit these notices to the Mexican government.

Almost the whole division had crowded around Filisola's tent in tense expectation, for this was the first post-battle news received from San Jacinto. Filisola announced simply that the President was still alive, although he and several other officers and soldiers were prisoners. The men then asked permission to beat a drum salute and fire salvos to celebrate the good news. This Filisola refused, saying that while he was as glad as they to learn that the President and some of the men had been spared, nevertheless, the misfortune of San Jacinto was a national disaster which, far from being a matter for rejoicing, should fill every Mexican with grief and bitterness.

A reply was drafted in which Filisola said he would do as ordered, but only for the safety of the prisoners, for he was having great difficulty restraining the ardor of his men who were clamoring to revenge the defeat of their countrymen. You will observe that it was not until the sixth day of flight that Filisola had received the order to withdraw. General Urrea, who was plainly harboring ambitions to play a more important role in the leadership, offered to carry the message to the Texas camp, acting at the same time as an observer.

He could thereby determine if further action by the Mexican army was advisable. It was decided that General Woll should go instead, as he spoke English and would therefore be of greater service than Urrea. Woll was allowed to enter the Texas camp under a flag of truce, and after a few days during which he informed himself of the terms of the so-called armistice, as well as of the strength of the Texans, he was allowed to depart. Only a short distance away he was detained by a few Texas scouts who held him prisoner for some time. Perhaps he should never have been permitted to visit the camp in the first place, but obviously it would be inadvisable to let him carry away information concerning the size of the Texas army, its armaments, munitions, etc. No doubt his detention was arranged by those in command, possibly Rusk. When the Mexican armies had retreated so far that they were no longer a threat, Woll was released. The Texans were not so foolish that they could not see that he had been sent to spy on them. Filisola later frankly declared: "I decided to send General Woll who spoke English and who could therefore not only explain himself to the enemy commander . . . , but also it would be easy for him to take advantage of the conversation of the crowd. . . ." ¹¹

For eight days the Mexicans laboriously moved southward before the third communication was received from Santa Anna, ordering the main body of troops to retire to Monterrey, leaving in Bexar a garrison of only 400 men and two pieces of artillery. Filisola did not stop until May 16, when he reached Goliad; then feeling himself fairly secure from attack by the Texans, and beyond the jurisdiction of Santa Anna, he began to await directives from the war department in Mexico. On May 25, during this stay in Goliad, he received a copy of the Velasco treaty of May 14 by which Santa Anna agreed that

all the Mexican troops should pass beyond the Rio Grande. This in no way changed the plans of the army, which had already resolved to withdraw to Mexico. Nevertheless, Filisola continued to linger, hoping that some word would be received from the supreme government and that any orders would coincide with his own intentions.

Meanwhile, Filisola's communiqué of April 25 had reached Mexico City about May 15. During the interval between the Battle of San Jacinto and May 15, the government was receiving Santa Anna's exaggerated reports of the annihilation of the rebels. On May 7 the *Diario del Gobierno* contained the following observation: "The worthy President of the Republic, the immortal General in chief of the National Army, ought today to be in San Felipe de Austin, the Capital of those ungrateful colonists who are attempting to separate from us the country they occupy; . . . From the moment the Mexican soldiers placed on it the sole of their foot, they have continued to advance in glorious triumph without suffering the slightest reverse, and we may with great satisfaction predict, that by the beginning of May part of our army will be on the banks of the Sabine River, the point known as the boundary between the two Nations and whose Treaty of limits should then be settled, because as has been well said by the Great Napoleon, 'The best Treaties are made in front of the Batteries.'"¹²

On May 19 the United States Chargé d'Affaires at Mexico City, Powhatan Ellis, sent to the State Department a lengthy dispatch which proved the alertness of the diplomatic corps in those days. It read in part: "For some days past it has been known the palace was in an unquiet state, and I drew the inference that unpleasant intelligence had been received in the capital. If it had been otherwise those in power would have proclaimed it to the world according to established

usage by the firing of cannon, processions, and the ringing of bells."¹³ On the same day the *Diario del Gobierno* published the news and the soldiery and citizens were called upon to rise and rescue their President from the imprisonment of his enemies, the infamous rebels of Texas. Ellis commented, "The effect of this movement time alone can fully disclose. I am however inclined to believe the people are not disposed to obey the call of those in authority; and so far as military force is relied on to release their illustrious President, I am confident it must fail."¹⁴

The next day, May 20, the Mexican Congress passed a decree declaring that "The Government will carry . . . on the war with Texas, without paying any attention to any stipulations made, or to be made, with the enemy by the captive president, all of which are declared and are to be considered as null and void."¹⁵ The Congress had not yet, of course, received any notice of the treaties of Velasco, but one can see how well they knew the character of Santa Anna. On the same day a circular was issued to the citizens by the provisional president José Justo Corro stating that "During the captivity of his excellency the president of the republic, a band of black crape shall be attached to the colors and standards of the troops of the Mexican army," and that "The national flag shall be lowered half-mast until the president general is restored to liberty."¹⁶

On May 28, three days after the arrival of the terms of the Velasco treaty, Filisola received the long-awaited instructions of the Mexican government, dated May 15, consisting of four recommendations: first, that he try to secure the freedom of Santa Anna; second, that he save the rest of the army by concentrating it in such a way as "to make it more respectable, situating it at a suitable point in order that it might re-

ceive foodstuffs"; third, that he hold Bexar; fourth, that he attempt to exchange prisoners. At this late date, however, no steps to carry out these orders could be taken that had not already been taken. Nearly a month before, Filisola had sent General Woll to inquire about Santa Anna and the prisoners, and he had not yet returned. Who else would want to return to the Texans and face possible imprisonment or execution? As for Bexar, General Andrade had already been ordered to evacuate the city in conformity with the treaties of Velasco. Neither was it easy to instill respectability into a horde of tattered refugees or to obtain foodstuffs in a land scorched by the native population and already plundered by the forces of Urrea. As for exchanging prisoners, the Mexicans, not anticipating a reverse, had hardly retained any Texans for trading purposes.

Finding no satisfactory suggestions in the government's directive, Filisola decided to stay a few days longer to receive a reply to a later account of his own which he had sent to Mexico on May 14, in which he related in detail the hardships of the army and the utter impossibility of further action without supplies from Mexico. During his leisure he sent another detailed account of the army, dated May 31, in which he again complained of the lack of food, clothing, medical supplies and transportation. He also expressed great concern over the presence of a very large number of women and children who had accompanied the army throughout the campaign. It was the custom in those days to require Mexican soldiers to gather most of their food along the way. The soldiers took along their wives, who performed this task for them and cooked their meals. As a result of the Texans' policy of destruction, these *soldaderas* could find very little food; in fact, not enough for themselves and their children.

The soldiers then felt obliged to give most of their single ration per day to their families and this led to debility, sickness, or desertion.

Still in Goliad, Filisola revealed an uneasy conscience over his inability to comply with the only recommendations so far received; so on June 1 he sent still another report, not only complaining of the lack of all necessities for the army, but intimating that the campaign had not been properly planned and executed. He said, "It is not forces nor valor that have been lacking on the present campaign . . . ; what was lacking was good organization of these forces, a better and more timely employment of the valor; [a lack of] planning, system, order, liaison, and a well defined pivotal point for the operations; [a lack of] circumspection in the present movements and foresight in future movements; [a lack of] means of subsistence and conservation for the forces themselves; [a lack of] mobility, instruction, better morale in all the classes of the army, and more adequate means to facilitate the rapidity of the movements and operations of the campaign."¹⁷

This was the opening shot in a war of words that lasted much longer than the war in Texas. For months accusations appeared one day, refutation the next, with Santa Anna, Filisola, and Urrea as the central figures, supported or denounced by a host of lesser ones. While Santa Anna never admitted any mistake in strategy, for that would be self-incrimination, he did accuse the nation of a half-hearted effort in the struggle. "It was necessary almost to improvise an army . . .," he admitted in support of the above statements of Filisola. "I considered it a very grave evil at such time to gather a large force for fear a considerable fraction of it might be persuaded to take an active part in national affairs which should be a matter of calm and freedom. . . ."¹⁸ In short, he hesitated to

raise a large army for fear it would turn against him.

The June 1 declaration of Filisola, which did not limit itself to a report on the conditions of the army as previous ones had done, but which injected his personal opinions into the incipient controversy, indicated that a complete break had been made with Santa Anna, whom he mistakenly considered to be no longer an important factor in Mexican politics. He therefore waited until June 9 in Goliad for a more feasible program from the government, but by that time discipline had so deteriorated that the retreat was resumed. The supply of food was practically exhausted and even water became so scarce that many fell by the wayside "with all the symptoms of hydrophobia." Wells were drilled, but no water was found. This was the army which six weeks before was marching in mud up to the neck.

On June 11 an order was received from Secretary of War Tornel relieving Filisola of his command. The new commander-in-chief was to be General José Urrea, who from the very first had insidiously plotted against Filisola. When he had asked permission to camp apart from the other troops at Mrs. Powell's, it was to conceal the small size of his forces, which had been depleted in order to accompany the enormous loot he had taken at Matagorda and other southern points and which he was sending back to Mexico without the knowledge of his superiors. When Filisola was floundering in the mud about April 27, Urrea forbade his scouts to give Filisola any information concerning the route. About May 5 he asked permission to advance to Victoria ahead of the main army. It developed that he picked up more loot at that place, depriving the following army of the scanty supplies that had remained. Advancing rapidly to Refugio, he took the food which had been deposited there by the Mexican boat Se-

gundo Correo, and from there he advanced with such haste and disorder to Matamoros that General Gaona, who followed a few days later, found many unburied Mexican soldiers along the way. In Matamoros he took possession of 173,000 pesos left there for the use of the army, but later he could account for only 30,000. None of these acts equalled the villainy committed in intercepting the government's orders to Filisola, and holding them until it was impossible for the latter to fulfill them even if he had wished.

On June 13 Filisola departed for Reinosá to join his family, while on the same date Urrea informed Tornel: "The campaign against the rebels of Texas will be opened again as soon as the army has rested a little, has sufficient clothing and shoes and the proper foodstuffs for its subsistence; and the supreme government can be sure that in a very short time the Department of Texas will be subdued. . . ." ¹⁹ Almost immediately Urrea began to hedge on this boast, saying that the army had retreated to Matamoros before he could get word to it to halt around Goliad or el Copano, that he found it in such poor condition that it could not turn back at once, and that he could not find sufficient supplies in Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas and Coahuila, as the small surplus that they produced had been consumed in the campaign just ended. In addition, he asked for more funds, all of which prompted Filisola to comment: "That is equivalent to saying that as soon as he had at his disposition all the things that Filisola had lacked, he would resume the campaign, which, certainly, would have been no extraordinary feat." ²⁰

On June 25 Filisola received the following letter from the Secretary of War: "I informed his Excellency the President ad interim of your communication, dated Right Shore of the Nueces, May 31, in answer to which I must inform you, in

accordance with the supreme orders I have received, that the whole of this communication has been looked upon with the greatest indignation. Your Excellency will have to answer for the serious offences you have committed in not adhering to points which the supreme congress ordered you to maintain, cost what they might. . . . Under no circumstances whatever ought you to have considered that the general-in-chief was in full exercise of his functions while in captivity. . . . The President concludes by requesting . . . that you repair, without delay, to this capital, and there answer for your conduct before the tribunals of your country."²¹ In the ensuing court-martial, the entire campaign was refought, foot by foot, just as it was in Texas and Washington during the next twenty years or so. Filisola was acquitted, because the ragged, starving remnant of what one was a proud army was irrefutable proof of the maelstrom that had engulfed it.

The Mexican government soon regretted its appointment of Urrea, who used his position to further his own political aims. First General Amador, then Nicolas Bravo replaced Urrea as commander-in-chief of the Second Campaign as it was called, and Filisola was placed second in command. Supplies were consumed faster than they could be gathered, so that the Second Campaign was fought entirely in the War offices in Mexico City. There were still a few veterans remaining from the First Campaign to instill fear in the new recruits who refused to march until sufficient supplies were sent ahead and salaries in arrears were paid in full. Preparations continued throughout 1837, but gradually the troops were recalled to quell disturbances in the interior, until finally the expeditionary army vanished completely.

After Santa Anna had signed the treaties of Velasco and it was seen that the Mexican army was no longer a threat, it

was decided in Texas that Santa Anna would be more valuable in Mexico where, if his government survived, he might persuade the Cabinet and Congress to ratify the treaties; or if it fell, and a war government should take over, Santa Anna could offer such opposition as to render all efforts at reconquest futile. Actually, Houston had stated that Santa Anna's presence in Mexico would create such dissention among the different factions that no effective military pressure could be brought to bear against Texas. Therefore the President was put aboard a boat bound for Mexico, only to be forcibly removed by a group of newly-arrived volunteers under General Thomas Green on June 1. There was a considerable faction, headed by Mirabeau Lamar, which was opposed to freeing the dictator, as we have already stated. Santa Anna, hearing all the clamor on shore, lost all courage, for he thought the Texans would surely march him to Goliad to execute him where Fannin's men had been slaughtered.

In a letter to President Burnet Santa Anna protested "for having been treated more like an ordinary criminal than as a prisoner of war." Burnet replied, "Your Excellency protests for having been treated more like an ordinary criminal, etc. If your Excellency alludes to the accommodations which have been assigned to you, I would reply that . . . [the reason why] we are at present destitute of the ordinary comforts of life, is mainly attributable to your Excellency's visit to our new country; and on this account we feel less regret that you should partake of our privations."²²

Santa Anna, who had seen freedom so near when placed on the *Invincible*, now felt that death was closer than ever. In desperation he planned to escape. A Spaniard named Bartolomé Pagés went to New Orleans and asked sympathizers of Santa Anna, including the Mexican consul in that

city, for money with which he may have intended to bribe the guards of the President. Pagés returned to Columbia where Santa Anna was imprisoned at the home of Dr. Phelps, but being highly suspect because of intelligence received from New Orleans, he was carefully watched. When he disobeyed rules by speaking to the President's secretary in Spanish, he was arrested. Santa Anna and Almonte then had a ball and chain placed upon their feet, and they kept these for two or three months. Santa Anna denied that he had intended to escape, and accused his secretary of falsely denouncing him.

Santa Anna did not, however, discard the diplomatic approach to liberation. On July 4, 1836—and the date may have been chosen purposely because of its association with liberty—he wrote a letter to President Jackson expressing his desire of being freed in order that he might make a visit to Washington to talk about the recognition of Texas independence. A copy of the letter was given to the Mexican Minister in Washington, Manuel Eduardo de Gorostiza, and was published in the Mexican newspapers as incontrovertible proof of Santa Anna's treachery. The latter defended his action, saying he had not offered to recognize Texas independence, but that he had merely proposed the possibility of a peaceful solution subject to the wishes of the Mexican Cabinet and Congress. Jackson's reply stated that while he was willing to offer his services as mediator if the Mexican government should so desire, he had been informed of the decree of May 20 disavowing any acts of Santa Anna. He added, however, that he would be happy if his Excellency would honor him with an unofficial visit. Santa Anna insisted that his letter had been badly translated, that Jackson misunderstood his intentions, that he must go and have a personal interview. The Mexican people, who were able to read the original, believed that

their former president had indicated his willingness to trade Texas for his freedom.

In September, Houston was elected president of Texas, and on November 25 he released Santa Anna and Almonte who, with guides, traveled by horseback, boat, carriage and train to Washington. Once out of Texas, hostility to the illustrious ex-prisoner ceased. At every stop the people flocked to see him. All the notables along the way wanted to shake his hand, and the reporters in every city asked for an interview. The *New York Times* correspondent in Louisville wrote, "He would easily pass for an intelligent and active merchant. I have observed him without finding anything villainous or disagreeable in his appearance. . . ." In Kentucky he was invited to address several of the state legislators. The farther north he went, the more he was acclaimed by the abolitionists as a crusader for human liberty. One Rhode Island paper asked, "How could we consider as a tyrant . . . one who opposes rebels and treats them with the severity that they deserve, rebels who fight for the horrible system of slavery?"²³ The only recorded instance of disrespect towards the dictator found in these reports was one from Louisville which stated that some rowdy threw a brickbat at him.

On January 18, 1837, Santa Anna arrived in Washington, where he conferred with Jackson with no sensational results. He did state that Jackson offered him six million dollars for Texas, but this is rather unlikely in view of the recent success of the Texas Revolution. After a dinner given in his honor by the American president, he returned by boat to Vera Cruz in February. Vera Cruz declared a holiday as though fêting a conquering hero. There were gun salutes, rockets, ringing of bells, triumphal arches and great throngs that waited to give him an ovation. While his spirits were raised by these demon-

strations of loyalty, he was not so emboldened that he considered the time opportune for reoccupying the presidential chair. He therefore retired to his estate at Manga de Clavo to wait until his adversaries made a worse mistake than he, a procedure he had followed, and was to follow many times more, with excellent results. Meanwhile, he spent his time writing a detailed report of the campaign to the Secretary of War and a Manifesto to the Mexican people. In the latter document he enumerated all the causes of the defeat at San Jacinto: the negligence of General Castrillón, the disobedience of General Filisola, the incompetence of General Cos. "None of these causes depended on omissions or acts directly attributable to me; I can be blamed, then, only for having a weak and sickly body . . . which . . . yielded to repose."²⁴ No, it was not his fault, for he was asleep when it happened!

Returning to the questions raised at the beginning, you will notice that Santa Anna was not rescued by the army as his supporters had hoped, nor shot by his captors as his political enemies had hoped. One might say he was freed by a whim of fate, which the Mexicans used so many times to describe their defeat at San Jacinto. The prisoners were saved from execution by the fact that they were kept so long as hostages that bitterness against them practically disappeared. The other armies did not suffer the same misfortune as the one at San Jacinto, but one can say that the results were hardly less disastrous. Reinforcements and supplies were not sent in time; in fact, there were not enough new supplies and men added to keep the army at its original strength. In Mexico, strangely enough, the Santa Annistas were not overthrown, but this was probably due to a lack of time, for Santa Anna's term was to expire on April 1, 1837, only a month after

his return to the country. Yucatan did rebel in 1837 when Mexico began conscription for the Second Campaign. It was not until 1839, however, that the revolution there was successful. In 1840 Yucatan succeeded in conquering the state of Campeche with which it formed an alliance, and in 1846 they declared their neutrality in the war against the United States. They even sent a mission to Washington to ask for annexation to this country. And finally, Texas independence was recognized, although sporadic raids were made into the state, the most successful of which were those conducted by Generals Vasquez and Woll who successively captured San Antonio in March and September, 1842.

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NOTES

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3. Filisola, vol. I, p. 133.
4. John J. Linn, *Fifty Years in Texas*, New York, 1883, p. 182.
5. Carlos Castañeda, *Mexican Side of the Texas Revolution*, pp. 38-39.
6. Filisola, vol. I, p. 118.
7. Filisola, vol. I, p. 163.
8. Filisola (edition of two separate volumes), Mexico, 1848, vol. I, p. 359.
9. Filisola (2 vols. in 1), vol. I, p. 217.
10. Filisola, vol. I, p. 218.
11. Filisola, vol. I, p. 221.
12. Quoted in William R. Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States*, Washington, 1937, vol. VIII, p. 318.
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14. Manning, vol. VIII, p. 326.
15. Niles Register, vol. L, p. 336.
16. Niles Register, vol. L, p. 337.
17. Filisola, vol. I, p. 338.
18. Genaro García, *Las guerras de Méjico con Tejas y los Estados Unidos*, Mexico, 1910, p. 14.
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20. Filisola, vol. I, p. 367.
21. Niles Register, vol. L, p. 414.
22. Niles Register, vol. LI, p. 191.
23. Rafael F. Muñoz, *Santa Anna, el que todo lo ganó y todo lo perdió*,
Madrid, 1936, p. 135.
24. Genaro García, p. 45.